

## North Carolina In Navy Department

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extension of geographical knowledge.

Commodore M. F. Maury, the well-known geographer, suggested the first of these expeditions, and Secretary Graham readily adopted the suggestion. After informing himself as far as possible of the whole situation, the geography and resources of the country to be explored, the routes to be taken, the difficulties to be overcome, he issued a letter of instruction to Lieutenant Herndon, then cruising off the western coast of South America—a letter, as has been well said, that "is characterized by that familiarity with the details of the project and that clearness as well as largeness of view which are found in all his important papers." In this letter he said:

"The department is about to confide to you a most important and delicate duty, which will call for the exercise of all those high qualities and attainments on account of which you have been selected.

"The government desires to be put in possession of certain information relating to the valley of the river Amazon, in which term is included the entire basin or water shed drained by that river and its tributaries. This desire extends not only to the present condition of that valley with regard to the navigation of its streams, to the number and condition, both industrial and social of its inhabitants, their trade and products, its climate, soil and productions, but also to its capacities for cultivation, and to the character and extent of its undeveloped commercial resources, whether of the field, the forest, river or the mine.

"To enable the government to form a proper estimate of the degree of that importance, present and prospective, is the object of your mission.

"You will make such geographical and scientific observations, by the way, as may be consistent with the main object of the expedition, always bearing in mind that these are merely incidental, and that no part of the main objects of the expedition is to be interfered with by them. It is desirable that you should bring home with you specimens or samples of the various articles of produce from the Amazon river, together with such seeds or plants as might probably be introduced into this country to advantage.

"Arriving at Para, you will embark by the first opportunity for the United States, and report in person to this department."

Upon receipt of these instructions, Lieutenant Herndon, after making his preparations, started from Lima and crossed the Cordilleras in company with Lieutenant Lardner Gibbon. Across the Cordilleras, Gibbon separated from the party to explore the Bolivian tributaries, while Herndon followed the main trunk of the great river, from its source to its mouth. Returning to the United States in 1852, after Graham had retired from the cabinet, he prepared an elaborate report of his expedition, which was published by the government. The work was extensively circulated, and is yet cited as an authority on ethnology and natural history. The service rendered by this expedition to commerce and science, it would be difficult to exaggerate.

But surpassing even this expedition in importance was that of Commodore Perry to Japan, which was authorized and prepared during the administration of Secretary Graham. For two reasons Graham's name has not been as intimately associated with this achievement as it deserves to be. In the first place the expedition, though authorized and prepared during his administration did not sail until after his retirement from the cabinet. In the second place the correspondence between Secretary Graham and Commodore Perry was private, the letters which passed between them on the subject were preserved among Mr. Graham's private papers, which have never been published, and his name does not appear as connected with this enterprise in the records of the Navy Department at Washington. From these letters it is clear that while the idea of the expedition did not originate with him, nevertheless to his clear understanding of its importance, his insistence upon it in the Cabinet conferences, and his deep interest in all the details, was due the decision of the administration to undertake it and to a large degree the success of the enterprise.

The extension of the boundaries of the United States to the Pacific Ocean by the acquisition of California, and the completion of the Panama Railroad, had aroused the interest of the people of the United States in the commerce of the Pacific and the possibilities of trade in the Far East. At that time Japan was one of the hermit nations of the world. Foreigners were forbidden to enter the country on any mission, upon pain of death. The crews of several American vessels wrecked on Japanese coasts had been cruelly treated, imprisoned, and murdered. European nations had made more than one attempt, without success, to break down this wall against foreign intercourse; it was now the turn of the United States. In 1850,

Commodore M. C. Perry suggested to Secretary Graham "the policy and expediency of sending a squadron of not less than three first-class war steamers accompanied by a sloop of war and a store ship to the Pacific Ocean for the purpose of making another and more energetic effort to open a commercial intercourse with Japan and the neighboring islands and ports situated upon the Yellow Sea." He justified his project on the ground that the Chinese and Japanese policy, with respect to the non-intercourse with strangers, was "at variance with the more modern notions of international trade and commercial comity, and . . . ought to be broken up and destroyed, upon the ground that the commerce of the world should be equally enjoyed by all the nations of the world upon fair and equitable terms of reciprocity." Secretary Graham was favorably impressed with the suggestion, and at his request Commodore Perry consulted confidentially with certain persons familiar with the trade of the East, and collected data bearing on the project. All these preliminary moves were conducted privately and confidentially, lest England or France, if they should learn of the plan, might forestall the United States. After collecting such data as he thought necessary, Secretary Graham laid the matter before the Cabinet, but no definite action was then taken.

Some time in the Spring of 1851, a United States barque, the *Auckland*, picked up at sea, 600 miles from Japan, some shipwrecked Japanese, who were kindly treated, brought into the port of San Francisco, and placed on board the U. S. revenue cutter *Polk* to await arrangements for their return to their native country. The government seized upon this incident as offering "a favorable opportunity for portunity for opening commercial relations with Japan"; and Secretary Graham promptly issued orders that the Japanese sailors should be sent to Hong Kong or Macao in China, delivered to Commodore John H. Aulick, commanding the American squadron in the China seas, and by him returned to their native country. Commodore Aulick was to deliver to the Emperor of Japan the following letter from the President:

Millard Fillmore, President of the United States of America,

to His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan.

Great and Good Friend: I send you this letter by an envoy of my own appointment, an officer of high rank in his country; who is no missionary of religion. He goes by my command to bear to you my greetings of good wishes; and to promote a friendship and commerce between two countries. You know that the U. S. of America now extends from sea to sea; that the great countries of Oregon and California are parts of the United States and that from these countries which are rich in gold, silver and precious stones our steamers can reach the shores of your happy land in less than twenty days. Many of our ships will now pass in every year and some perhaps twice every year between California and China; these ships must pass along the coasts of your Empire, storms and wind may cause them to be wrecked upon your shores; and we ask and expect from your friendship and your greatness, kindness for our men and protection for our property. We wish that our people may be permitted to trade with your people; but we shall not authorize them to break any laws of your Empire.

Our object is friendly commercial intercourse and nothing more. You have many productions which we should be glad to buy and we have productions which might suit your people. Your Empire has a great abundance of coal. This is an article which our steamships in going from California to China might use. They would be glad that a harbor in your Empire should be appointed to which coal might be brought and where they might always be able to purchase it. In many other respects commerce between your Empire and our country would be useful to both. Let us consider well what new interests arise from these recent events which have brought our two countries so near together and what purposes of friendship, amity and intercourse they ought to inspire in the breasts of those who govern both countries.

Farewell.

Given under my hand and seal at the City of Washington the tenth day of May, 1851, and of the Independence of the United States the seventy-fifth.

MILLARD FILLMORE.

By the President.

DANIEL WEBSTER,

Secy. of State.

On May 31, 1851, Secretary Graham addressed a long letter of instructions to Commodore Aulick, which, however, on their face, did not contemplate a special mission such as had been proposed by Commodore Perry. When Commodore Aulick reached Japan with his charges, the natives refused to permit their unfortunate countrymen to land and would not supply the American vessels with food or water. Early in the year 1852, the Administration changed its plans, and decided upon the mission which Perry and Graham had been so long advocating. The Secretary of the Navy then determined to relieve Commodore Aulick and to place Perry in command.

Accordingly the following letter was written to Perry:

Navy Department, March 24, 1852.

Commodore M. C. Perry, Appointed to Command the U. S. Squadron East India and China Seas.

Sir:

You have been designated, as has already been intimated to you, to take command without unnecessary delay, of the Squadron in the East India and China Seas.

In addition to the vessels already on that station, the Squadron will consist of the Steam Frigate *Mississippi*, the first class Steamer *Princeton*, and the Store Ship *Supply*.

You will therefore at once take command of these several vessels and hasten their preparations for sea with all practicable despatch. Commander W. J. McCreary in command of the *Mississippi*, at New York, Lieut. Sinclair in command of the Store Ship *Supply* in the same harbor, and Commander S. S. Lee who is directed to assume command of the *Princeton* at Boston by the 15th of April, are severally directed to report to you, as well as the Commandants of the respective navy yards aforesaid, for orders touching their preparations for early departure.

The *Mississippi* will be your Flag Ship until your arrival on the Station, when at your option, your flag may be transferred to any other vessel of the Squadron.

To facilitate the early enlistment of suitable crews for these vessels, the Department adopts the suggestion contained in your communication of yesterday, and yourself and the officers in command of the ships aforesaid, are authorized to nominate such men for stewards, cooks, servants, musicians, etc., as you may select. Also such native or natural citizens to be received as landsmen, in lieu of a like number of ordinary seamen, as you may think fit, all of whom will be enlisted at the rendezvous most convenient to the vessels respectively.

I am, Sir,

Very respectfully,

Your obt. Servt.,

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM.

During the next two months, while Perry was preparing for his departure, he kept in close touch with Secretary Graham who manifested a deep interest in every detail of the expedition. Before the expedition failed, however, Graham had resigned, and Perry's final instructions were issued to him by Graham's successor, John P. Kennedy. In his letter to Perry, Sec. Kennedy enclosed a copy of Graham's instructions of May 31, 1851, to Commodore Aulick, "which," he wrote, "you will consider as in full force and applicable to your command." Perry sailed on this epoch-making voyage November 24, 1852. With the further details of the expedition, we are not here concerned; its results were much more far-reaching than Perry himself could have foreseen. "The conduct of the Japanese subsequent to his departure showed how fully and rapidly they had acquired the conviction that the appliances of their old civilization were powerless to resist the new. Orders were issued rescinding the long-enforced veto against the construction of sea-going ships; the feudal chiefs were invited to build and arm large vessels; the Dutch were commissioned to furnish a ship of war and to procure from Europe all the best works on modern military science; any one who had acquired any expert knowledge through the medium of Deshima was taken into official favor; forts were built; cannon were cast and troops were drilled. . . . Instructions were issued that if the Americans returned, they were to be dealt with peacefully. The sight of Perry's steam-propelled ships, the powerful guns and all the specimens they carried of western wonders, had practically broken down the barriers of Japan's isolation without any need of treaties or conventions."

Graham's administration received the endorsement of his party, which, in 1852, nominated him for the Vice-Presidency on the ticket with General Scott. He immediately tendered his resignation to the President and retired from the cabinet. Defeated for the Vice-Presidency, he returned to private life, and during the next eight years was the great leader of the Conservative forces of North Carolina. In the campaign of 1860 he shared with Badger and Vance, the latter then rising into fame and influence, the leadership of the Union men of the State. Like Badger, and unlike Vance, he did not believe in the constitutional right of secession, but when secession became inevitable, he supported it as a revolutionary, not a constitutional measure. During the Civil War he served in the Senate of the Confederate Congress, and at its close was elected to the United States Senate but refused his seat. His death occurred at Saratoga, N. Y., where he was serving as a commissioner to settle a boundary line dispute between Virginia and Maryland, August 11, 1875.

Says his biographer, Mr. Frank Nash:

"There has lived in North Carolina no public man whose life was a greater force for good than was that of Governor Graham. It was, and is, an exemplification of all the virtues that a public man should have—intelligence, industry, courage, unselfishness, devotion to the public welfare

and to duty. . . . He was endowed by nature with an excellent mind, and a noble and very handsome presence. His mind was assiduously cultivated and trained. He had the religious and moral instincts by inheritance, and these grew and strengthened in the environment in which his life was placed. He had no bad habits as a boy, none as a youth and none as a man. Instead, the habits of thrift, of industry and thoroughness became a second nature to him. He was ambitious, but it was with a guided and controlled ambition when he came to face the world—larger spheres of usefulness. All these who he became to face the world enabled him to conquer a place for himself second to no North Carolinian.

He was many-sided, and a great deal of his work remains, and there is none of it that is not far above the average. He is entitled to very high rank as a lawyer, as a public speaker, as a statesman and as a writer, and the highest as a faithful, as a thorough and as a conscientious public official."

James Cochrane Dobbin.

Franklin Pierce treated the country to a surprise in 1853, when he announced the appointment of James C. Dobbin as Secretary of the Navy. Except for a single term in the lower branch of Congress, Mr. Dobbin had had no experience in national politics, and was almost unknown beyond the limits of his own State. Even in North Carolina he had had no career in public life, except three terms in the Legislature. Yet so strong an impression had his more than ordinary ability, his sound judgment, his courage, his rare powers as a debater, his winning personality, his high sense of personal and political honor made upon the people of the State, that before he had reached his thirty-fifth year he had become the recognized leader of his party, which stood ready to elevate him to the highest positions within the gift of the people.

Dobbin advanced to his high position by the same steps on which all other aspiring youths of his time mounted—graduation from the State University, entrance into some prominent lawyer's office, admission to the bar, and then either a political or a judicial career according to individual inclination. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina, fourth in his class, in 1832, studied law under Judge Robert Strange, and settled at Fayetteville to practice his profession. No accident came to lift him into sudden prominence. Politics had no attractions for him, and though frequently urged to become a candidate for the Legislature, he steadily declined preferring to devote himself to the study and practice of the law. In 1845 the Democrats of his district, without his knowledge and in his absence, nominated him for Congress. He was elected by an overwhelming majority, served in the Twenty-ninth Congress, and declined re-election. Elected to the General Assembly in 1848, he aligned himself with the liberal element in that body, and in opposition to his own party supported such progressive measures as internal improvements, the incorporation of the North Carolina Railroad Company, and the erection of a State Hospital for the Insane. Returning to the Legislature in 1850, he was elected speaker of the House of Commons. During the session a great debate occurred in the House of Commons, while in Committee of the Whole, on the question of the relation of the States to the Federal Union, in which Mr. Dobbin made one of the greatest efforts of his life. He spoke with his usual force and clearness for more than an hour to an attentive House and crowded galleries, upon the rights of the States "according to the Constitution."

He took the ground boldly that the States are sovereign—that they have a right to judge of infractions of the Constitution, and of the mode and measure of redress—in a word, that a State in the last resort has a right to secede from the Union and take care of her own interest and honor." The right of secession, however, was not a "constitutional right," but a "reserved right," and one that ought never to be exercised except in the last extremity; much ought to be borne for the sake of the Union, for, he exclaimed, "The day of its dissolution will be the darkest day for human liberty the world has ever seen." Mr. Dobbin's love for the Union was one of the strongest sentiments of his life, and on more than one occasion he delivered his sentiments in language of unquestionable meaning.

By 1852 Mr. Dobbin had become the recognized leader of the Democratic party in North Carolina. In June of that year he was at the head of the North Carolina delegation to the National Democratic Convention that met in Baltimore. A long and bitter contest was waged over the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency, the names of James Buchanan, William L. Marcy, Lewis Cass, Stephen A. Douglas and Franklin Pierce being before the convention. For a time it looked as if the delegates would not be able to agree and as if the convention would adjourn in confusion; but finally, after many ballots had been taken in vain, when it came to North Carolina's turn to vote again, Mr. Dobbin arose, and in a ringing speech of only two minutes, appealing for union and harmony, he announced North Carolina's vote for Franklin Pierce.

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